NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA

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Rep. Honda Introduces Legislation to Develop and Measure Effectiveness of Federal Nanotechnology Strategy

WASHINGTON, January 9, 2003 — Representative Mike Honda (D – San Jose) has introduced the "Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Advisory Board Act of 2003" H.R. 283. This legislation would establish an independent advisory board, comprised of leaders from industry and academia, to advise the President of the United States and Congress on research investment strategy, policy, objectives, and oversight related to the federal government's National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI). In 2002, Rep. Honda introduced similar legislation.

This bill would create an advisory board of experts who would help articulate short-term (1-5 years), medium-range (6-10 years), and long-range (10+ years) goals and objectives and establish performance metrics. The board would also submit an annual report to the President and Congress regarding nanotechnology progress, and a review on funding levels for nanotechnology activities for each federal agency.

"The nanotechnology industry could become one of the new engines of our economy, and will have a dramatic impact on society," said Rep. Honda. "It is of utmost importance that the United States lead in the development of the nanotechnology industry. My legislation will make sure that the federal government has an aggressive, achievable, and measurable plan."

As a member of the House Committee on Science, a committee of jurisdiction, Rep. Honda is optimistic that the provisions in his bill will advance in the 108th session. "Over the past few months, my legislative proposal has been gaining support throughout industry and academia," said Rep. Honda. "My legislation, and other nanotechnology proposals must be addressed in a bi-partisan matter. I look forward to advancing this and other nanotechnology issues in this session."

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Background

Nanotechnology refers to the ability of scientists and engineers to manipulate matter at the level of single atoms, and small groups of atoms. With new tools, structural properties of matter 1/100,000 the width of hair are being manipulated by researchers. Nanoscale work will enable the development of unprecedented scientific and technological opportunities that will benefit society by changing the way many things are designed and made in information technology, medicine, energy, biotechnology, electronics and almost every conceivable discipline or industry. For the technology sector, nanotechnology processes will allow semiconductor innovation to advance Moore's Law beyond the limitations imposed by today's design, development, and fabrication tools.

In 1996, a federal interagency working group was formed to set up and define a national nanotechnology strategy. This developed into the NNI, which is a collaborative initiative of 13 federal agencies. According to the National Science Foundation, the market for nanotechnology products and services in the United States alone could reach over $1 trillion by 2015.

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